

Often immense numbers of individuals compose the flight, and the air may be literally "filled with ants." Tanquary believed that fertilization of the females took place in the nests prior to the nuptial flights, since he had never seen a male and female in copulation outside of the nest. After the flights it is common for the fertilized females to shed their wings and enter small self-made cavities in the ground. These queens remain alone in their chambers over winter, and do not normally lay eggs or start a new brood until the following spring. Successive broods are produced over an unknown number of years until at last the colony is large enough to produce males and winged females. Some colonies under certain conditions may become hosts of temporary parasites of other ants belonging to such genera as *Lasius* and *Acanthomyops*. Gregg has found a mixed colony of *L. umbratus* and *neoniger*, and Talbot has found a mixed colony of *A. murphyi* and *neoniger*. Talbot indicates that in ordinary summer weather workers of *neoniger* are largely nocturnal, their activity beginning to rise in the late afternoon, continuing through the night, and decreasing toward morning.

Workers feed on both dead and live insects, the secretions of floral and extrafloral nectaries, and the honeydew excreted by plant lice, mealybugs, and other honeydew-excreting insects. Not only do these ants assiduously tend many different kinds of plant lice, but they also foster and transport certain subterranean plant lice.

The relationship of this ant to the corn root aphid *Anuraphis maidiradicis* (Forbes), is a classic example of mutualism. The ants store and care for the aphid eggs in their nest during the winter. In the spring when the aphids have hatched from the eggs, the ants carry them to the roots of certain grasses and weeds where the aphids remain and feed until the corn has grown enough to support the aphids; the ants then carry them to the corn roots. In this relationship they protect, care for, and transport the aphids as the occasion may require. *L. neoniger* has the same general relationship to *Anuraphis maidiradicis* on the roots of cotton. Orlob found that *Lasius neoniger* was of secondary importance in the spread of barley yellow dwarf virus by the aphid *Schizaphis (Toxoptera) graminum* (Rondani) on barley and oats. The ants were of importance in this role because they increased aphid populations largely by their protection of the plant lice from natural enemies, and also by furnishing the lice ideal quarters in which to breed. Orlob apparently thinks that the role of ants in bodily carrying infected lice from plant to plant is of little significance. *L. neoniger* is a frequent house invader, usually from outdoors, quite often following rains. These invasions are of short duration and lack the persistency of those of the Pharaoh ant, Argentine ant, or Pavement ant. Workers are general feeders on household foods, but seem to show a slight preference for sweets and meats. The ants can also be pests of some importance on golf courses where their innumerable earthen craters not only mar the appearance of the course, but also interfere with the game. Observers have noted workers and males of this ant being used by starlings, *Sturnus vulgaris* (Linnaeus), and grackles, *Quiscalus quiscula* (Linnaeus), in "anting." Occasional individuals of this ant, especially workers, bear fine, gravel-like objects